

## **NLW in the Middle East, the truth and the myth**

The topic, which I have selected for my presentation: Non Lethal Weapons, is a difficult and a challenging one. I will try to review that subject with a broader view, as well as through the current day to day reality in Israel. I hope it will put things into the right perspective and context, other wise, I am afraid it will be just an academic exercise.

Therefore, I called my presentation: NLW in the Middle East, myth and facts, or the truth and the myth.

Generally speaking, there are great expectations regarding this concept of N-L-W. But one should recognize that it involves sometimes not only technology uncertainties, but also policy and rules of engagement issues, simulations to be validated, test & evaluation challenges, affordable production costs, media coverage and public opinion whenever being used. And so many other considerations.

These considerations apply of course only to the free democratic countries.

As said before, I will also try to challenge this subject in the context of what is called in the media: the conflict between Israel (which is a democratic state, 52 years old) and the Palestinians. I will not define their current or future legal status, or what kind of a state or governance it will be, I hope it will be a true democracy. I note this because lately I have read that in the past 60 years, there has been no war between 2 democratic countries.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, calling the reality we are facing a “conflict”, or “interesting situation” is a remote and an academic approach. For us the Israelis, for the state of Israel, it is a fight, a struggle for the survival of our own country; one of several we had in our 3000 years of history. We are in a mini war situation, not in riot control situation, not in a civilian

disobedient situation, not in a peacekeeping mission in ones other country. That has to be recognized.

It means different rules of engagement, policy etc.

It also means that we act under different set of acknowledged international laws, which we and the free world respect.

The situation in the “street” is truly complicated. A word about who do we physically face when the fighting occurs.

- \* Official security forces under Arafat’s control (basically wearing uniforms). Armed with weapons which we as you probably know supply them.

- \* Armed gangs, the “Tanzim”, lately armed by Arafat’s order, basically without uniform. (By the way, they have used A.T missiles, as well as mortas)

- \* The “ Hamas”, a well organized, weaponized, fundamentalists, who reject the peace process (most suicide missions were organized and excented by the Hamas), without uniform.

- \* Part of the population, adults, youth, armed with Molotov cocktail and rocks. I say part because part of the Palestinians

population truly wants to live in peace and make a living, as we do.

And when it comes to a clash in the “street”, they are all mixed. Further more, they extensively use the tactics of sending/putting young people and women, as a barrier, a living shelter.

So what do you do? What do you do when you command a squad and you are facing hundreds, sometimes thousands of raging unarmed and armed people? Where some of them wear uniforms and some don't, knowing you may inflame the whole mid east if you act wrongly.

What weapons do you use? Knowing that if they had reached to a distance of less than hundred yards, your small force would be overwhelmed.

What do you do in order to spare the lives of the unarmed civilians? How can you identify them while your life is in real danger? I was thinking, how would I be able to explain, to share with you what goes through ones mind when he is scared to death, when he thinks that his life is in danger...

It is hard to share emotion, so the best example I am thinking of is related to driving. Try to remember how did you feel, how did you act when all of a sudden you were sure that you are about to collide in some other's car.

Do you remember the movie "rules of engagement"? Personally, I think it is a unique movie, describing in a realistic manner a complicated scenario, a movie that really goes deep into the motions, the dilemmas, the moral ones as well as to the operational ones.

Just to give you some numbers, in the past 6 months more than 2600 events of hostile firing occurred, over 110 events of booby trap/side charges, 8 suicide explosions among innocent civilians. Currently, the average is 2-4 hostile shootings events per day, part of them towards our capitol, Jerusalem. You hardly hear about it anymore here.

While we consider it to be low... would any other democracy tolerate this without taking drastic action? Something you have

never, and I hope and wish will never have to face. We do not have the luxury of being defeated, not even ones.

For the Israeli men in the street this poses an ultimate question of survival.

How do you win in such a situation where you cannot or don't want to fully exercise your power?

To give you a better appreciation and a clear perspective of the situation and the dilemmas related to N.L.W, I would like to share with you a 10-min. video clip. Please try to note the small details: the terrain, age of people, the N.L.W being used, the operational scenarios, and the numeric ratio between the two sides, the atmosphere.

It is crucial to understand that there is no single "silver bullet" solution or weapon to the situation we face, or other situation elsewhere in the world where you face, like Kosovo for instance or lately in Macedonia. I say it because people, frequently tend, mistakenly, to look for solutions to new operational scenarios, or emerging threats, through new technologies.

NLW will/might be only one piece in a big puzzle. The other pieces will continue to be the traditional ones: policy, rules of engagement, training level of the forces, “traditional weapons”, etc.

Interestingly enough, reading the statement of Gen. James Jones, the commandant of the Marine Corps (in regard to NLW), when he speaks about the need to develop new NLW, the words, language, to win, does not appear, instead he says, and I quote:

“Effectively deal with...”

I spent a lot of time thinking about his words and I am sure that he had selected his words very carefully.

The way I interpret it: at certain times you (a soldier, a Sovran state) should exercise legitimately your “traditional weapons”, doctrines, drills, rules of engagement, etc. in order to win.

May be he realizes that it would be hard to win while using only N.L.W?

A point to think about. I will discuss it further in a few minutes.

Normally, armies are put into “conflicts” in order to win.

Win does not necessarily mean to defeat the other side, does not necessarily mean to bring your enemy/the other side to the point of surrender, of humiliation, so what is the goal?

We may have to re-define that term “win”. Well, that should be considered through many criteria and that definition should have great influence on the nature, characteristics of the NLW, as well as how to use it and when.

Are you dealing with an enemy? Is the enemy a regular army?

Are you facing civilian violence? Are you on a peacekeeping mission; is it your homeland?

Furthermore, a definition of winning a war or a battle at a state level (strategic decision) is totally different when you try to define it to the squad leader. (Tactical level)

Although Gen. Jones was relating not only to L.I.C, but rather to all level of war, I do assume it will not count when the survival of the U.S as a nation will be threatened, nor its high value interests.



Now, allow me to intrigue your mind with the following:

How about using what one may call: use of traditional weapons in a N.L way?

Have you noticed it in the video? In response to lynching two of our soldiers (you must remember the horrible pictures) we launched A.T missiles (which we all know have relatively low collateral damage) from gunship helicopters into empty headquarters, were in addition, a 3 hours notice was given to the Palestinians to clear them and the near by vicinity. (That fact by the way was never mentioned by the media which covered the event – and that probably made a big difference as you will soon hear).

In my view this is an excellent example where one can use his traditional weapon in a NLW manner, a combination of: high accuracy munitions, low collateral damage, empty targets, no lives were lost, pre warning.

But for that act we were widely criticized and blamed for using excessive force. Some do not accept our legitimate right to take

all needed action in order to defend ourselves. But that is another issue, the moral equivalence.

We widely make use of another N.L.W mean: standard tear gas (which in the situation we face has been largely ineffective, and later on I will speak about efficiency and deterrence in regard to NLW). It was claimed that we add cancer-causing additives to the standard tear gas, and some people, distinguished ones, believe that propaganda. How would you deal with such wild accusations?

It is important to recognize that what might be true and suitable for one country, one area of conflict with its unique related social and cultural environment, might not be right for other country, other region. What you are, and other European countries are facing in Kosovo (which is mainly a peace keeping force activity) or previously in Somalia, (and by mentioning it, I by no means intend to neglect these important missions) is not similar to the “intifada”, meaning the “war for independence” as it is named by the Palestinians. We are facing our advesteries

and fight them on portions of our own homeland, defending our own state, on our own.

Another point that may intrigue you. Looking into Webster's dictionary reveals the following definition of the word

“weapon” and I quote:

“Something (as a knife or a gun) used to injure, defeat, or destroy”.

Looking into Britannica reveals the following definition:

“An instrument used in combat for the purpose of killing, injuring or defeating an enemy”.

In my mind, there is no doubt that using the term NLW is contradictory and a confusing one. Especially due to the reason that our mind interprets and looks at the N-L-W as means that can not kill: Non lethal...

Let me share with you a well-known secret:

Everything can kill, even bare hands, rocks, as we have just seen in the video clip. So may be it is the intent that makes the difference!? Or may be it is the combination of the intent and

the mean/weapon to be used that makes the difference? Or

maybe the way it is implanted that makes the difference?!

I would suggest that we should look for another term instead of using the term NLW.

How about “soft weapons”?

Speaking about soft weapons, I would like to be more specific.

One may categorize SW into 3 main categories:

- Where the target is a person/persons, crowd where it is difficult to recognize who is armed and who is not.
- “Hardware” damaging S.W – where the targets might be: communication facilities, weapons, plants, and transportation.
- High discriminatory S.W – where the target is a particular person in a crowd/a group of persons. The person to be identified might be a kidnapper, an innocent woman in a raged crowd, or a sniper among raged crowd.

To simplify things, I will concentrate on the first category:

“S.W where it is aimed/used against a person/persons, crowd where it is difficult to recognize/identify those who use arms.

The expectation for the utility of S.W is high all over the world:

- \* Minimal level of collateral damage
- \* No loss of human lives
- \* Looks good on CNN prime time...
- High Efficiency.

Question: if the hour after... the day after... clashes will continue, would you still consider it effective?

I am willing to adopt the expectation as I spoke about them just a minute ago as a basis for the definition with one small caveat: let us lower our expectation as for the non lethality of what might be used as S.W.

Unfortunately there is no 100% certainty that the weapon being used will not cause death or disability.

Will we be able to set the exact amount, dose, power while using S.W in order to achieve the desired effect where people with different weights, age are present? How do we validate it?

Will the soldier use it even he feels he is in danger? Will he trust those means? Will it be simple to operate them under stress conditions?

I would like to end up with one last point to think about: the potential connection between SW efficiency and deterrence.

You all probably would agree with me that the best way, maybe even the most cost-effective way to prevent a war, is deterrence.

Thinking about deterrence, it has only been effective in preventing devastating conflicts by threatening the use of devastating means.

Looking at the last decades would reveal that we were not able to develop and implement deterrence capability to all other types of wars with the current traditional, conventional weapons.

(Those that kill, those that create disabilities, big collateral damage...)

Why should someone (a non-democratic country, a regime terrorist) exclude the behavior of being an aggressor if he really doesn't pay for being violence?

One must think what real effect will SW have if it is minimally harmful to people and without much collateral damages.

One must take into account how a potential aggressor will act, knowing he is likely to face SW.

One needs to consider the asymmetrical situation where one side uses traditional weapons, and the defender, the good guy responds with SW.

Are we about to see wars where both sides use S.W?

I wonder.